



Translation of titles in Hindi remake films from South Indian cinema and vice -versa after the year 2000.

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Abstract

The nature of Indian films has rapidly changed in the past few years. Today the cinema is turned into a huge commercial business, with the drastic increase in star-fees producers are facing many problems in shaping the budget of the films which they later need to recover from the box-office. keeping the profit factor into account. The remake practice in world cinema has always been a profitable venture for all and so do the Bollywood remakes of the regional film. The remake formula works because it gives the makers a choice, in fact a strong choice of selection and reaction of the viewers. Adapting a new film from one language to yours is easier than fabricating a new film with a fresh storyline but marketing is required for the film to shout at the box-office. While adapting a film from a different language one of the most important tasks is to come up with the title that justifies the film as well as not throw away the suspense or the mystery of the film. In this article I have tried to analyze how the titles of the adapted/remade films are fabricated.

Introduction

The big fish of film productions India is a land of multilingual cinema with more than 2000 films released every year from small regional films to mass commercial Bollywood films. The box office is never at rest, all thanks to the experimental directors who keep on bringing stories, stories that were made to be remembered, to be cherished and to be re-watched. These stories travel to us by surviving the approval of the writers, the directors, the actors and the producers who showed faith in the story. All these heavy responsibilities linked with the faith are presented to us on the day of the release of the film, this day decides the fate of the faith, but what happens at the backend? What is the process of naming this faith? For new film it is very obvious that the director and the producer have 'n' number of possibilities to name that film but when it comes to remake the creators are not left with many choices. In majority cases the metaphorical theme that the film

presented is translated to the target language, a recent example can be given of the Sandeep Reddy Vanga directorial film 'Animal' that was rumored to be titled as 'Devil' when planned to be initially shot in Telugu. Here linguistically both the words have no connections and in fact originate from a third (English language), but still when the language of the film changed so did the title only representing the brief theme.

The titles of the adaptations and neither translated word by word, victim to the grammatical and cultural differences the product will result into a very bizarre title for a film as seen in the example of Shahrukh Khan starrer Cult classic 'Swades' released in 2004, but very few know, it is a remake of a Kannada film 'Chigurida kanasu' (English translation -The sprouted dreams).The story revolves around the lead hero who gives up his urban life to live in a rural village for the benefit of villagers.

Nor do the film titles named after the protagonist for his actions are translated without proper alignment with the culture as seen in the Telugu film 'Arjun Reddy' later re-made into 'Kabir Singh' or the Classic 'Amar Akbar Anthony' remade and translated into 'Ram Robert Rahim'. But there are still some exceptions to this practice, for example the 2008 released 'Ghajini' was titled the same as the original Tamil film 'Ghajini' released in 2005 such practice of naming the film after the principal character is termed as Titular Films. Looking back at the history we have a very few Titular films where the technique called 'Emprunte' is used to translate the titles. Other techniques such as 'Literal translation', 'Modulation', 'Transposition' and 'Equivalence' will also be covered through the channel of films translated into Hindi from South-Indian languages and the films adapted from Hindi to other South-Indian languages.

Films adapted from South Indian languages to Hindi

Today the cinema going audiences are very aware about the film that they are going to watch but that was not the case then in 2000s, this wave of remakes saw a huge decline in the nineties as the Romance genre took over Bollywood, but the 2000 Hindi comedy film 'Hera-Pheri' revived this practice back 'Hera Pheri' was a remake of the Malayalam film 'Ramji Rao speaking' (1989). Both the original as well as the remake went on to be huge cult-classics, however what is not similar between the two are their titles 'Hera Pheri' is a Hindi word that explains the main theme of the film and the Chaos that will be presented on screen. 'Ramji Rao speaking' however fails to explain what the film will be dealing with, the remake could have been translated into (for example protagonist speaking), but the makers went with a fresh idea that sets it apart from the former. The director of the film (Hera Pheri) decided to follow the practice and released a set of comedy films adapted into Hindi from South Indian movies for example ('Hulchul' (2004)– 'GodFather' (1991) Malayalam), ('Hungama'(2003) –'PoochakkoruMookuthi' (1984) Malayalam), ('Dhol'(2007) –'Harihar Nagar' (1990) Malayalam),('ChupChup Ke'(2006) – 'Punjabi House'(1998) Malayalam), ('Bhagam Bhag'(2006) –'Mannar Mathai' (1995) Malayalam).

2000s was also the year of Romantic-Dramas, where we saw the films that turned the actors into Superstars, the 2003 released 'Tere Naam' is considered to be life changing attempt for Salman Khan, the film was inspired by 1999 Tamil films 'Sethu', both the films have a cult following today. However, if you look at their titles, the original is named after the principal character while the second one is a bit symbolic that represents the love that the main character possesses for his love. The film is considered to be one of the finest works of both the actors.

The series of films were released in the latter half of 2000s, however the films that opened the floodgates were the 2008 released 'Ghajini' (Titular films covered later in the article) and the

2009 released 'Wanted' that was a remake of 2006 Telugu film 'Pokkiri' (English Translation - shameless/evil or wicked). Both the projects starred the biggest actors of their respective industries and their titles were self-explanatory of the actions that the protagonist will be performing. However, the former title has a very blunt approach. Another action genre that follows the list of these successful attempts was the 2014 released 'Holiday' that was a remake of 2012 Tamil film 'Thuppakki' (English translation- gun) was later modified to holiday that explains the army backdrop of the film.

Talking about the Rom-Com genre, the original films were ruling Bollywood and were even being adapted into other languages. Looking at the statistics of the last 20 years we can conclude that Crime and Action are the most preferred genres that the makers used to adapt in the Hindi film industry.

Titular Films

When planning for a titular film it is hard to come up with a different title for the remade version, as when the former was made the title held the most important role so now if the fresh version will not match the title with the plot the box office will see a drastic failure in such cases. In such cases either the technique of literal translation is used or the same title is implemented. The most appropriate example would be the 2015 released 'Drishyam' which (translates to visuals) with the original film released just two years before in Malayalam language with the same title. The Hindi remake introduced the Hindi speakers to the marvels offered by South Indian cinema, but there has been a film back in 2008 that was a remake with the same title of the former film made in 2005. Often criticized to be a remake of Christopher Nolan's master-piece. 'Memento' but here in the Indian context the makers went with the same name and today the title Ghajini is a huge part of the Indian pop culture. The titular films have proved to impact pop culture with their titles. One such example is of the 2019 remade film 'Kabir Singh' that was made by the same director of the former original Telugu film 'Arjun Reddy' in 2017 the title was not completely the same but reflected the same Idea. The most recent attempt was the 2022 released film 'Vikram- Vedha', that was remade after the 2017 Tamil film of the same name. However apart from the name and the director nothing was the same in the film as the film failed to match the box-office success of the former one.

When looking into the regional South Indian cinema the number of remakes being practiced has seen a significant decline when compared to the number back in the 80s and 90s, however, the example of a titular remake film in the South Indian language from Hindi is the Telugu film 'Shankar Dada MBBS' (2004) renamed after the former, Hindi film 'Munna Bhai MBBS' (2003) both the film titles are self-explanatory, the legacy of the films were later continued when the second installment of the Hindi version was released in 2006 as 'Lage Raho Munna Bhai' and 2007 as 'Shankar Dada Zindabad'. The recent trends have proved that now the theatre going audience has no interest in watching remade films just for the sake of their favorite actor as they did back in the days. This may give rise to the problem for the regional films not reaching their full potential, but the makers have come up with the term Pan India through the umbrella of which they can penetrate every part of India, universal titles that will resonate with every part of the country are chosen, the examples of 'Baahubali', 'KGF series' and 'RRR' can be given while explaining the term, Pan India. Some exceptions like that of 'kantara', 'Ponniyin Selvan' and 'Sairat' are the movies that penetrated the complete Indian box office with the title that was never universal.

Films adapted from Bollywood to the South Indian regional industries

Today the regional films are defeating Bollywood in making good content-oriented films and are even attracting their audience. Thanks to the flood of remakes that Bollywood adapted after the year 2000 so much so that today is being criticized if any such attempt is made, but this regional industry has also been performing such practices, one such example of the 2009 released cult classic '3 Idiots' can be given that was remade into the Tamil as 'Nanban' (that translates to friends in English) the title here was translated using the technique equivalence. Generally equivalence is used the most by the South Indian filmmakers when they try their hands on re-making a film, certain examples can be given of the 2012 released Telugu film 'Gabbar Singh' (a fearless dacoit) that was a remake of the 2010 released 'Dabang' (fearless), 2009 released Tamil film 'Unnaipol Oruvam' was adapted from the 2008 released Hindi film 'A Wednesday', 'Gopala-Gopala' the Telugu film released in 2015 was yet another remake of the 2012 released Hindi film 'Oh My God'.

Conclusion

The flood of films that we have each year in India has been home of such remakes, the profit that these remakes used to fill the pockets of the producers and the makers of these films is rapidly decreasing but the journey of these films have always been interesting and much more interesting is how the titles change when a film is remade, does it performed better than the former version or failed to replicate the magic all this depends on the title as well as it sets the remake version apart from the original, it creates a mystery around and the buzz required for the film to shine and Survive at the box office. Through the channel of this article, one may understand how and why the titles of films (when remade in a different language) are fabricated, why the titles are similar in some cases, why in some word-by-word translation is done and why sometimes an equivalent title is chosen.

To conclude I would like to explain that this exchange of titles is done with a lot of research, of course the makers always study the reception of the audience towards the previous title, there might surely be special meetings to decide the titles, the former title is first translated into the target language. If the stories resonate with the translated version of the title, makers might go with either some cultural modifications or just stick with the original title if it best suits the theme. However, at the end of the day a film belongs to a production house, so even a title is decided after deep research of the previous statistics, its cultural reflections and even consulting some professional translators, if a production house denies your translated title your film might be a victim of a false decision.

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